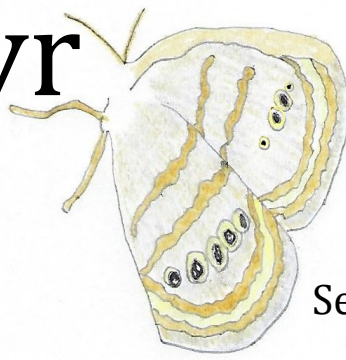


The Lonely Satyr



For Butterfly Enthusiasts
of Northeast Indiana

September 1, 2023

Monarch Winter 2022-23 and Spring 2023 Population Numbers

by Karen Oberhauser, UW-Madison Arboretum

This article originally appeared in the Summer 2023 e-newsletter "MLMP Updates," and is being reprinted here with the author's permission and author's updates. Karen Oberhauser is the Founder of the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project. Thank you for sharing!

The first 2023 generation of eastern North American monarchs has moved from the southern U.S. into their northern breeding grounds. There were a few very early Journey North sightings in Wisconsin and Michigan (before April 18), but a much stronger surge right when expected in the first half of May. These monarchs are the offspring of individuals that flew from the north last autumn, spent the winter in Mexico, and then moved back north into the southern parts of the U.S. MLMP volunteers in the southern U.S. kept track of the egg-laying activity of the generation that overwintered, monitored the development of these eggs through their larval stage, and then sent the monarchs up to their northern breeding grounds.



Credit: Karen Oberhauser, 8/2023

While it's too early to make predictions about the 2023 eastern migratory population, we can make some comparisons from the past few years. Numbers in Mexico were slightly lower than they were last year, but there hasn't been a big change over the past four years. Data from MLMP volunteers in Texas (1) represent reproductive output of the generation that overwintered in Mexico. Comparing numbers over the past few years for late March and April reflects the lower numbers from Mexico (2): numbers from this year are slightly lower than the previous several years (be sure to note the different y-axis scales on the yearly graphs).

In general May and June MLMP data from the Upper Midwestern States of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan and Illinois represent the reproductive output of the first generation monarchs that were born in the south this spring, while July and August data represent eggs (and resulting) larvae laid by monarchs that were born in these northern states. May and June numbers in 2023 were higher than last year, but lower than they were in 2021. This held true for the July and August numbers. To see how monarchs are doing in different Midwestern states, check out the MLMP graphs here: <https://app.mlmp.org/Results/>

Population Numbers continued

The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation released numbers (3) for this population in January (the western population is measured in numbers of butterflies vs. numbers of hectares of trees with monarchs in them in Mexico). Volunteers counted over 330,000 butterflies, as opposed to about 250,000 in 2022 and fewer than 2000 during the winter of 2020-2021. So far, there are very few MLMP monarch reports from western states other than California and Arizona, but Gail Morris's updates on Journey North (4) provide evidence that at least a few monarchs are spreading out from these southern states.

Breeding monarch numbers (what we record for the MLMP) in any given year are caused by a complex mix of factors—the number that were present the previous year, how well they survived in their overwintering sites, the conditions they encountered during the spring migration, and conditions in their main breeding grounds. Your data, combined with observations from Journey North and other monarch and butterfly monitoring organizations, will help us put together the story of the 2023 as it unfolds. I hope that your 2023 monitoring season is well underway. Whether things are picking up and you're seeing more monarchs, or numbers are low because of continued drought, your data are incredibly valuable. Thank you!

Article References:

1. Data from MLMP Texas Volunteers link:

<https://app.mlmp.org/Results/StateResults?state=TX>

2. Numbers from Mexico link:

<https://monarchconservation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Eastern-Monarch-Population-19931994-20222023-1.png>

3. Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation link:

<https://xerces.org/press/western-monarch-count-tallies-over-330000-butterflies>

4. Gail Morris' updates on Journey North link:

<https://journeynorth.org/monarchs/resources/article/western-monarch-news-archive>

If you'd like to read the rest of the newsletter or past newsletters:

<https://mlmp.org/mlmp-resources/downloads-links>

University of Wisconsin—Madison Arboretum
arboretum.wisc.edu



Credit: Karen Oberhauser, 8/2023

Local Sightings

Right: Giant Swallowtail

Photo credit: Janet McGowan

St. Patrick's County Park, St. Joseph Co., IN
8/5/23

Giant Swallowtail was also reported by Kathy
Brittenham in LaGrange, Co., IN, on 8/10/23.



Above: Common Wood Nymph

Photo credit: Nancy and Richard Gerber
Whitley Co., IN
8/20/23



Above: Zabulon Skippers (male and female)

Photo credit: Russ Voorhees
Eagle Marsh, Fort Wayne, IN
8/15/23

John Brittenham reported a Zabulon Skipper in
LaGrange Co., IN, on 8/17/23.

Local Sightings

Right: Eastern Tiger Swallowtails

Photo credit: Richard Gerber

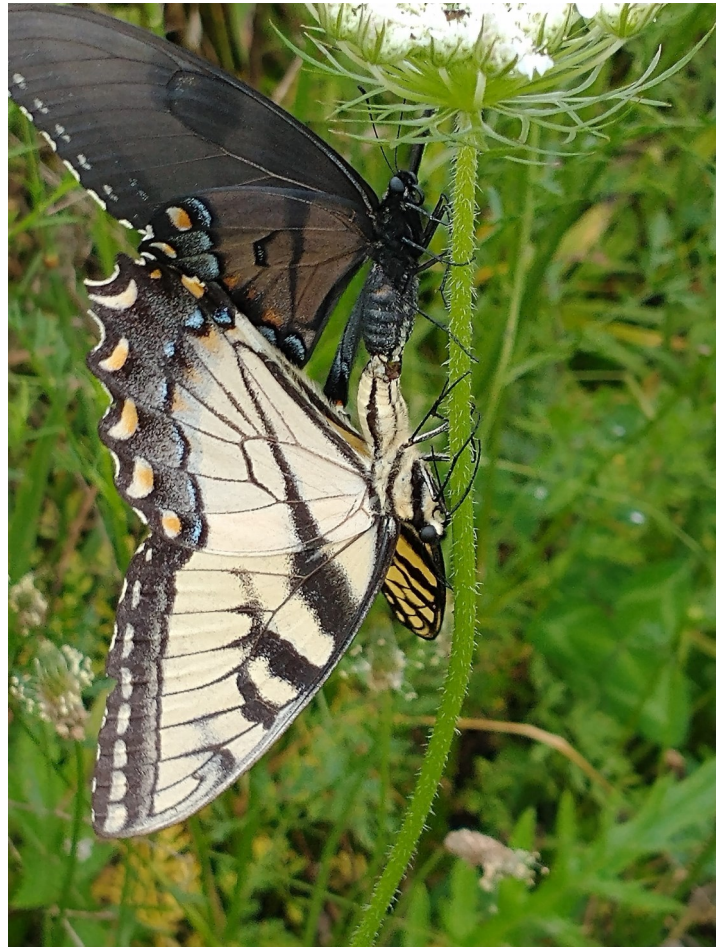
Whitley County, IN

8/8/23

Richard and Nancy also reported a Silver-spotted Skipper and Great Spangled Fritillary.

John Brittenham also reported an Eastern Tiger Swallowtail in Branch Co., MI, on 7/31/23.

Carole Mitchell also reported male and dark form female Eastern Tiger Swallowtails in Goshen, IN, on 8/11/23.



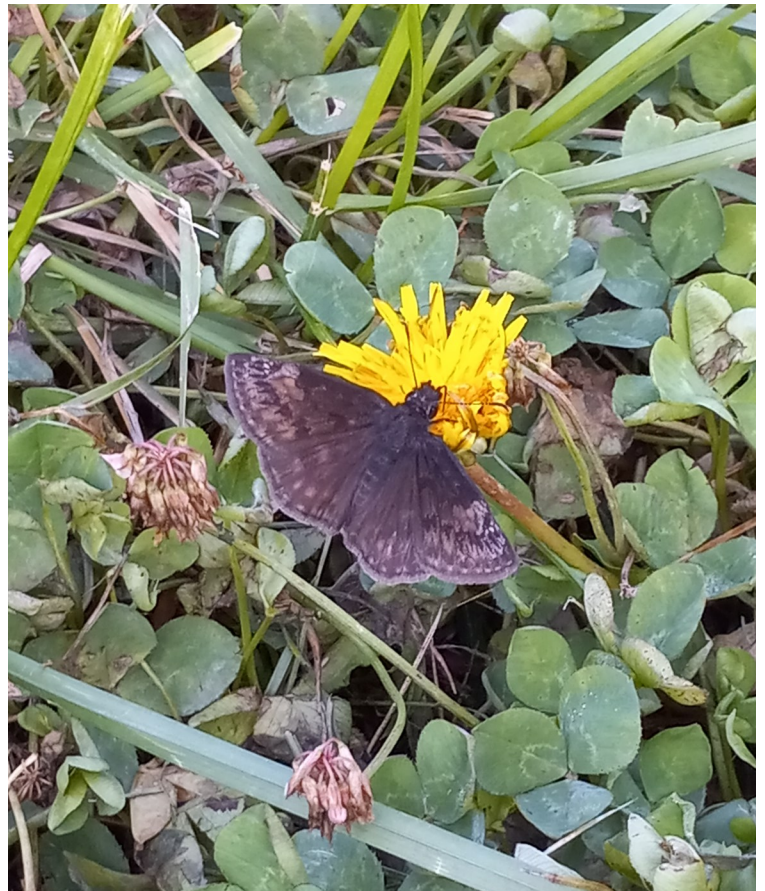
Right: Wild Indigo Duskywing (I think?)

Photo credit: Leslie Arnold

Dallas Lake Park, LaGrange, Co., IN

8/16/23

Leslie also reported a Common Checkered Skipper at Dallas Lake Park on 8/29/23.



Local Sightings

Right: Common Ringlet
Photo credit: Brandon Brywczyński
Leonard Preserve, Manchester, MI
8/19/23

John Michael Durback and Brandon also reported seeing a female Zabulon Skipper and Common Roadside-Skipper.



Above Left: Zabulon Skipper (female)
Above Right: Harvester
Photo credit: Ronda Spink
KRV Trail Galesburg, Kalamazoo Co., MI
8/16/23

Ronda commented "The Zabulon Skippers and Harvesters seem to be everywhere this year."

Community Calendar

Contact the event host prior to traveling to make sure it's not cancelled.

Monarch Tagging Days

Michigan Butterfly Network, Kalamazoo Nature Center

Kalamazoo, MI

September 5, 12, 16, 19, 23, 26

1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Fee: \$7/Member; \$10/Non-member

"Join KNC researchers for our beginner-friendly Monarch tagging days and help in this vital effort to conserve the species!"

Registration is required! Call 269-381-1574 OR

go to <https://naturecenter.org/michiganbutterfly/>

Monarch Festival

Sunday, September 10, 12:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Little River Wetlands Project

Eagle Marsh Nature Preserve Barn, Fort Wayne, IN

FREE- conservation partners, vendors, education stations, native plant give away, and food trucks. Experience the beauty of the marsh!

Visit their website <https://www.lrwp.org/events> for more information or to register as a vendor or volunteer.

Monarchs and More Family Fun Day

Sunday, September 10, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Sauder Village, Archbold, OH, 43502

All activities will take place at Little Lake Erie (located behind historic Sauder Village & near the Campground) to enjoy a FREE afternoon of fun! Trolley ride from Founder's Hall to the event. The Village itself is closed on Sunday. Monarch program, bee keeping, wetlands trolley tours, habitat preservation, food trucks and more.

Dessert with Discussion: Genetic Rescue to the Rescue

Tuesday, October 3, 6:30-8:30 p.m. (talk at 7:00 p.m.)

W.K. Kellogg Biological Station, MSU

3700 E. Gull Lake Dr., Hickory Corners, MI

Drs. Sarah Fitzpatrick and Cinnamon Mittan-Moreau will present an overview of "genetic rescue" and how it is being considered as a way to save the Mitchell's Satyr butterfly. FREE - Registration is required for in-person attendance and virtual Zoom viewing option.

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/events/kbs-fall2023-dessert-with-discussion>

(No endorsement or discrimination of specific events or vendors on this community calendar is intended or implied.)

Butterfly House

Sarett Nature Center

2300 Benton Center Rd.

Benton Harbor, MI 49022

Hours: Tuesday—Sunday, Memorial Day through Sept. 30, or as butterflies persist

Member fee: Adults \$5, Children \$3

Non-member fee: Adults \$8, Children \$4

Tagging Monarchs - Monarch Watch

<https://monarchwatch.org/tagging/>

2023 Monarch Tags are now available to order:

Online: <http://shop.monarchwatch.org>

Mail, Phone, Fax:

Monarch Watch Shop

c/o Nonprofit Business Solutions

2701 Centerville Rd.

Wilmington, DE 19808

1-800-780-9986

1-877-687-4878 - Fax

If you would like paper copies of tagging instructions and an order form, please let me know and I'll mail you some. According to Monarch Watch, due to our Latitude, our region should begin tagging mid-August.

If you'd like your event information to be in October's newsletter, please turn it in by Sept. 22. Local sightings are my favorite part of the newsletter, so please report what you're seeing. Don't be shy! Photos are great! October is our last newsletter for 2023.

To subscribe and submit, contact:

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